



Northeast Region Multi Modal Access



Above: Trolley bus at The Old House, Adams National Historical Park

Project Background. The National Park Service (NPS) has built successful multi modal access systems in 26 parks in the Northeast Region. These systems provide over 13,000,000 passenger trips per year, which is over 23% of the annual visitation to all the parks in the region. The multi modal systems have numerous benefits, including

- providing the only access or primary access to 12 entire parks or portions of parks,
- providing access where parking is not available,
- increasing car free visits,
- increasing safety,
- enhancing quality visitor experiences, and
- reducing emissions.

These multi modal systems have been developed as partnerships in which the NPS provides only 11% of the multi modal operating costs and owns only 17% of the alternative transportation assets.

Funding constraints. The Northeast Region is allotted \$2.7M of Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) funds per year to support this program, (a 46% reduction from previous years), and the elimination of the Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program has meant a further loss of \$6 million per year for national parks in the Northeast. These funding constraints mean that the NPS is unable to fund long-term capital needs for rehabilitation of major assets such as docks.

In addition, numerous planned enhancements to build upon existing access projects and services—such as expanding multi modal trails, enhancing shuttle

services and facilities, and solving identified safety issues—will be abandoned resulting in the program failing to fully maintain critical assets and achieving its strategic goals.

Necessary repairs. An example of the capital needs is the \$11 million rehabilitation of the George's Island Dock, which provides the primary access to Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area. The dock handles 200,000 visitor trips annually, serving local urban populations to access nearby outdoor recreation on George's Island and 32 other islands in the park. One third of the dock is now closed due to advanced deterioration and safety hazards. Design for the dock replacement is completed.

Another \$25 million to \$40 million is needed for rehabilitation, construction, and completion of 17 multi-use access trails at a dozen national parks in the region. These projects include

- existing and new access multi use trails connecting dense urban neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Staten Island to Jamaica Bay, Fort Wadsworth and Great Kills units of Gateway National Recreation Area;
- multi-use paths connecting Boston National Historical Park and Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation



Dock at Bumpkin Island, Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area

Mega-Project* Profile: Enhancement of Multi Modal Access in the Northeast Region

Estimated cost: \$58 million
to \$94 million (preliminary)

Percentage of Northeast
Region (NER) FLTP Annual
Allotment for ATP: 2140%
to 3481%

Percentage of NPS FLTP
Annual Allotment for ATP:
386%

* **Mega Projects:** The NPS transportation system is supported, in part, by funds from the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP). Currently, the NPS is authorized an annual budget of \$268 million from the FLTP. These funds are apportioned by formula among the seven NPS Regions. Most of these funds are used for “transportation asset management” – that is, to pay for the work required to keep existing assets in good condition. There are some projects, such as a major bridge repair or ship replacement, that require a much larger amount of funding than is available on an annual basis to a Region. These we call “Mega Projects.” The NPS is pursuing strategies to fund these projects.



Multiuse Path at Assateague Island National Seashore



Park Tour Boat, Pawtucket Canal, Lowell National Historical Park

Area to the North Station regional transportation center; and

- multi-use paths at Cape Cod National Seashore connecting the Boston ferries through Provincetown and to NPS beaches and visitor facilities.

All these multi modal path projects have very high use levels, and the four parks serve 15 million people each year.

At Lowell National Historical Park, the NPS, along with local, state, and federal partners, is seeking to expand the successful existing Lowell Park Trolley route to include

- the Gallagher Transportation Terminal (which serves train connections to Boston),
- the University of Massachusetts Lowell,
- sports arenas, and
- residential and commercial neighborhoods of the City of Lowell.

The overarching goal is to serve as an effective arm of public transit in the city as well as serving the National Historical Park. The NPS is seeking \$7 million as its share of the partnership.

At Acadia National Park, a partnership effort is underway to create a new Acadia Gateway Intermodal Center outside the park boundary to provide more visitors with information, parking, and access to the Island Explorer shuttle system before they enter the park, thus reducing congestion and emissions and maintaining a quality visitor experience at this heavily used national park. The NPS share of this partnership to construct the Intermodal Center is \$5 million to \$12 million.

At Adams National Historical Park, the NPS is partnering with the City of Quincy and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to develop a transportation hub to enhance connections between downtown Quincy with NPS sites in the city, and with Boston via the public transit system. This connection is critical because the NPS sites are inaccessible without the existing NPS shuttle and a transportation hub, and the park’s visitation has increased by more than 800% in the past 25 years.

The City of Quincy has entered a period of large-scale downtown redevelopment, and seeks to develop new transportation and other public facilities with NPS as a

partner, to support the city’s revitalization. The transportation hub will cost an estimated \$11 million.

The Northeast Region has identified \$13 million of important safety improvements related to multi modal transportation. Of these, a number are safety improvements for pedestrian or multi modal crossings of roadways at Minute Man National Historical Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, and other parks. One is to construct traffic calming measures and a bike path along Route 24 at Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park, where high speed traffic through the park has long posed safety risks and where a park employee was killed in a 2010 traffic accident.

In addition, many of the safety improvements are specific, smaller scale improvements which could be accomplished rapidly at ten Northeast Region national parks with the highest need if funds were available. The NPS has the opportunity to maintain and enhance the multi modal program it has established in the region, creating highly effective and critical multi modal access across the region, providing national park experiences to new audiences through effective partnerships for millions of people each year.

Most of the operational costs for the existing multi modal program are covered by transit ticket sales and fees, with only limited impact on ONPS budgets at most park units. Ticket sales also provide sufficient funding for capital costs associated with most ferry boat purchases. Partners, including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and state Departments of Transportation, contribute a share of capital funding for docks and shuttle vehicles. Modest FLTP capital investments can ensure that the NPS and its partners fulfill essential infrastructure needs and achieve NPS strategic goals.



Battle Road Trail, Minute Man National Historical Park